

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Forgive us for raising this while you're dealing with important issues in the Middle East, but could you clarify for us, sir, exactly what your relationship was with Ms. Lewinsky, and whether the two of you talked by phone, including any messages you may have left?

The President. Let me say, first of all, I want to reiterate what I said yesterday. The allegations are false, and I would never ask anybody to do anything other than tell the truth. Let's get to the big issues there, about the nature of the relationship and whether I suggested anybody not tell the truth. That is false.

Now, there are a lot of other questions that are, I think, very legitimate. You have a right to ask them; you and the American people have a right to get answers. We are working very hard to comply and get all the requests for information up here, and we will give you as many answers as we can, as soon as we can, at the appropriate time, consistent with our obligation to also cooperate with the investigations.

And that's not a dodge, that's really why I've—I've talked with our people. I want to do that. I'd like for you to have more rather than less, sooner rather than later. So we'll work through it as quickly as we can and get all those questions out there to you.

Pope's Visit to Cuba

Q. Mr. President, about the Pope and Cuba, what are your impressions of the remarkable scenes of the Pope in Cuba, and what about his call for an end to the embargo?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm glad he went to Cuba. I think it's a wonderful thing and I'm glad that Mr. Castro invited him to come. I'm glad the Cuban Government let the Christian people in Cuba celebrate Christmas last Christmas, acknowledge it in an explicit and open way. And I hope that this trip will lead to some reassessment on the part of the Cuban Government that would enable us to move closer together in many ways.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator. Chairman Arafat spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Videotaped Remarks on the 25th Anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade Decision

January 22, 1998

On January 22d, we marked the 25th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court decision that affirmed every woman's right to choose whether and when to have a child, and in doing so, affirmed two of our Nation's most deeply-held values, personal privacy and family responsibility.

Over the past 25 years, *Roe v. Wade* has had a major positive impact on the health and well-being of American women and their families. Safe, legal abortion has all but eliminated the dangerous, clandestine conditions that claimed too many women's lives when the procedure was illegal.

I'm committed to keeping abortion safe, legal, and accessible—and to making it more rare. Over the last 5 years, we've led the way on policies to prevent unintended pregnancy by making comprehensive family planning and sex education programs more widely available. We've increased support for Title X family planning services every year in our budget. And I'll do so again this year.

I fought to continue funding for international family planning, bringing much needed health care to women all around the world. Here at home, by working together with health care professionals, community groups, schools, and family planning agencies, we've made real progress in reducing teen pregnancy. And I was proud to sign legislation to protect the rights *Roe* established by protecting women's clinics from violence. We have enforced that law to its full extent.

I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that every child in America is a wanted child, raised in a loving, strong family. Ultimately, that idea is what the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* celebrates.

Hillary and I join with all of you in commemorating this milestone and pledge ourselves anew to protecting the right to choose. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President recorded these remarks on January 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the Apprehension of Goran Jelusic

January 22, 1998

I welcome the news that Goran Jelusic has been detained by SFOR forces, led by American units, in the Republika Srpska city of Bijelina. He is now being transported to The Hague for trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Jelusic was indicted by the Tribunal in 1995 for 56 counts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The SFOR forces acted according to their rules of engagement, which authorize the apprehension of indicted war criminals when encountered in the course of their duties. This was the third such apprehension by SFOR forces, following actions last July and December that resulted in the capture of four indictees and the death of a fifth.

I congratulate the SFOR troops who participated in this effort. The United States continues to support fully the work of the Tribunal to bring indicted war criminals to justice. Jelusic will be the 23rd of 78 indictees brought to The Hague for trial. It is important to recall that most of these were delivered in the last 7 months by the parties themselves. We intend to sustain political and economic pressure to assure continued compliance with the Dayton accords.

We must continue this progress. Today, I call again on all parties to the Dayton accords to fulfill their obligations to bring all indicted war criminals to justice. Carrying out these commitments is essential for advancing the work of reconciliation in Bosnia.

Statement on Receiving the Interim Report of the Secretary of State's Special Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad

January 23, 1998

I welcome the report of the Committee, which my administration established in November 1996 to advise us on means to combat religious persecution and intolerance abroad.

I am pleased that the Committee has recognized the considerable efforts we have already made to raise the profile of these issues and invigorate our advocacy, and we will carefully study the Committee's recommendations on how we can do more.

This distinguished group of Americans is playing a critical role in our effort to promote religious freedom abroad, and we look forward to a continued and close collaboration as the Committee prepares its final report in the months to come.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 17

In the afternoon, the President gave testimony by deposition in the law offices of attorney Robert S. Bennett.

January 20

In the evening, the President met with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel in the Oval Office.

January 21

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen B. Hand as member and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.